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A DAUGHTER OF THE REDS

(Continued from page 8)

Intelligence. I discovered this trap—my papers were forged—I was six years in Cologne. They think I am a German. Good God, how helpless I am! Young Von Taun went to Versailles yesterday; he may return any moment. You understand, dear mademoiselle. He may return to-night; and they will kill me, for he will tell them that my papers are forged. If I cannot get away from here before he comes, mademoiselle—"

Some one turned the handle of the door, and he fell back in the bed again, and lay as though sleeping. The intruder was the pseudo-cavalry officer who had encountered Dolores upon the stairs. He thrust a grinning face around the door, and asked a childish question:

"Come down-stairs and play to us, mademoiselle. Old Brachelli has a fine piano. I promise you they cannot hear a note from the street. That fellow Eberhart there has monopolized you long enough. Come and amuse the others."

She turned her back upon him and made no reply. When he had condescended to depart, having uttered many pleasantries, the wounded man sat up again and continued his story.

"Don't be frightened of them, mademoiselle," he said earnestly. "My pistol is under my pillow. Use it if they threaten you. I shall want it to-night, when Von Taun comes back. Good God! they would tear me in pieces!"

He paused a moment, as though suddenly conscious of his situation and its meaning. Then anticipating her question, he continued quickly: "Listen! The papers I carry were stolen by me from the German spy Eberhart. He was not among these men here, but attached to the Crown Prince's staff. Our fellows shot him, and I took his papers. I should have been discovered two days ago in the trenches at Avron, but I shot the man who tracked me down. That's where I got my hurt. Then Muller came up, and I showed him the papers to save my life. He brought me here, and you know the rest. Mademoiselle, he believes me to be Ernest Eberhart. Are you listening, mademoiselle? Very well, he will learn who I am when the messenger returns from Versailles, and then, mademoiselle, and then—"

The effort cost him much, and he crouched down in the bed, shivering with pain and fear. What to say to him, how to promise him deliverance, was beyond the wit of the brave girl by his side. She could only say: "We will face it together; I will answer for you." Even for this the opportunities were brief enough; and the lad's story scarcely had been told when the German returned, and asked, still smiling, if they had need of anything.

"Yes," she said quickly; for now an idea came to her as upon a voice of her salvation. "Yes, lieutenant, I have need of something; but it is not in this house."

"Ah, a carriage and pair, mademoiselle—that is your need, no doubt?" She shrugged her shoulders, as though despairing of his common-sense, and continued: "Captain Muller—I beg your pardon, Captain Collingwood, though I have reason to believe that they are one and the same person—Captain Collingwood, then, has left instructions that a messenger is at my disposal."

"Two messengers, twenty messengers, mademoiselle—if you say so—"

"One will be sufficient. He is to go to the chemist's shop in the Boulevard St. Michel. I will write down a list of the things I require. Please let me have pen and ink, lieutenant; you see that there is no time to lose."

She indicated Raphael Decroix, who drank in every word uttered, and, acting

the part cleverly, turned and tossed restlessly upon his bed. The German, on his part, did not know how to answer her. The request came so unexpectedly and yet was so reasonable that a plea for its refusal did not occur to him readily. More than that, he believed her when she said that his Captain had pledged himself so far.

"The messenger shall certainly go," he said hesitatingly. "I will be careful to select one we can trust. There are pens and ink on the table here, if you wish to write. Is it quite impossible to tell me what you want, mademoiselle? I was never much in love with the pen when one can do without it."

"If you were a doctor, lieutenant, I could tell you; but you are not, and therefore you will not understand. Oh, don't let me alarm you. I am going to ask you to read every word I write."

Her candor disarmed him; and standing with his back to the fireplace he lit a cigar, and watched her at the table. The moment was one of the most critical he or she would ever live through. Here lay salvation at the pen's point, if she could only sufficiently command her inventive faculties. How to tell Paris the story of Count Brachelli's house, and yet so tell it that this booby might not perceive it, that was the problem before her. For an instant she dwelt upon her thoughts; then began to write swiftly.

"Here is the list, lieutenant. Please read it for yourself."

He bowed and took the paper. "I see you are a doctor," he commented, with a laugh. "Where did you learn it all, mademoiselle?"

"Your guns conferred my diploma upon me. My practice is in the homes of the poor."

"And they teach you to sign your prescriptions with your name? Come, mademoiselle, that won't do here!"

The insolence brought the blood to her cheeks. She took the paper from him with a gesture of disdain, and sat again at the table. "There!" she said, writing it for the second time. "Will that satisfy you?"

He merely glanced at it. "We shall give Eberhart a dose together just now," he said as he went to the door. "Don't go to sleep while I am away, mademoiselle."

"Please leave me!" she said. "And if you would save your friend's life, bid them make haste."

He merely glanced at it. "We shall give Eberhart a dose together just now," he said as he went to the door. "Don't go to sleep while I am away, mademoiselle."

The messenger was absent for half an hour; but when he returned the man who called himself Captain Collingwood, but whose real name was Muller, returned with him, and received an account of the request and of its execution. A few words exchanged with the lieutenant appeared to satisfy him; and when he inspected the purchases, the lotion, the dressing and the linen bandages, he seemed entirely reassured.

"The account they gave me of your wisdom is correct, mademoiselle," he said. "I shall hope to express my obligation better when I return to my own country. It may be that we shall be compelled to leave this house at an earlier moment than I had counted upon. I would be a thousand times beholden to you if this poor young fellow could leave with us. At the same time we must not impose upon your good nature. One of my men can sit here to-night. You will permit him to wake you if the patient becomes worse."

"No, indeed," she rejoined quickly; "the case is too grave for that. I will not leave this room to-night, Captain."

He accepted her offer under protest, pointing out to her that one of the finest bed-rooms in the house had been reserved for her. Evidently concerned about some news he had heard in the streets, he went

down-stairs anon, and left Dolores alone with Raphael Decroix. Both of them understood that the critical hour had to come. It was then close upon midnight, and whatever work these hawks had to do in Paris would begin at such an hour. But they had no heart to speak of it, and for a full hour they sat, waiting and watching for the dreadful moment. When it came, the lad's quick ear warned him of the peril before Dolores had a thought of it. He sprang up in bed and bade her listen with him.

"There is Von Taun!" he exclaimed, his eyes wild with terror. "He will tell them who I am. Hark to that! There is some one in the hall. Oh, my God, mademoiselle, if it were Von Taun!"

They listened together, and heard a low hum of voices; then the sound of a door shutting softly, and of a footstep creeping up the stair. Step by step it mounted, came shuffling along the landing, and passed them. The open door— for they had left it open purposely—revealed the figure of a bent old woman dressed in rags, ostensibly a cripple. This ghoul-like apparition disappeared in the dim light, and silence fell again upon that house of mystery. Raphael Decroix sank back upon the bed with a sigh, and closed his eyes as though in pain.

"Take the pistol from me to use when they come!" he implored her pathetically. "Do that which is wise, dear lady. Oh, they are brutes, brutes, and I must die by their hands! Is that Von Taun, do you think? Yes, yes! I hear his step! Mademoiselle, kill me if Von Taun returns! For God's sake, do not let them torture me!"

She promised him to do as he wished, for it had become plain that he raved in delirium. Her own situation defied all words in its power to terrify and to suggest the ultimate torture of suspense. The great lonely house, the dimly lighted room, the whispering voices—all this in the heart of her own beloved Paris! This, and the conspiracy against the city's honor, against her army and her country—that these things should be defied realization, and seemed to thrust her down to the very nadir of shame. One hope alone remained to her, hope in a man who never had deserted her, in one by whom she was beloved and to whom her appeal had gone out. To this man she had sent the message on the paper. But would it reach him? Could he help her if it did? How many times did she ask these questions as she tried to calm the lad's fears and to comfort him to sleep!

"You wrote upon the paper, dear lady?" he asked at one time.

"To the English doctor, Edmund Orlopp. Yes, I sent the message to him."

"But how did you send it?"

"Monsieur Tavler the chemist is perfectly acquainted with my handwriting. I told him in Latin words, written one by one among the other directions, to follow the messenger. I think that it will be enough. He will send to my house, and find that I have not returned; then he will go to Dr. Orlopp."

"Yes, he would do that, of course; but, mademoiselle, is it too late? Hush, for God's sake! That is Von Taun speaking now!"

He sat up, defying restraint, and pressed his hands to his eyes as though to shut from his vision the pictures his brain imagined. Undoubtedly some one talked in loud tones in the hall below, and upon this voices were raised in fierce exclamation.

"Give me the pistol! Give it to me. I say, mademoiselle! Would you have me torn limb from limb? Hark, they are coming up the stairs. What right have you to say that I shall live, mademoiselle? Give me the pistol!"

Her heart beat wildly; but she shut the door and locked it, hiding the revolver beneath her dress, but fully de-

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